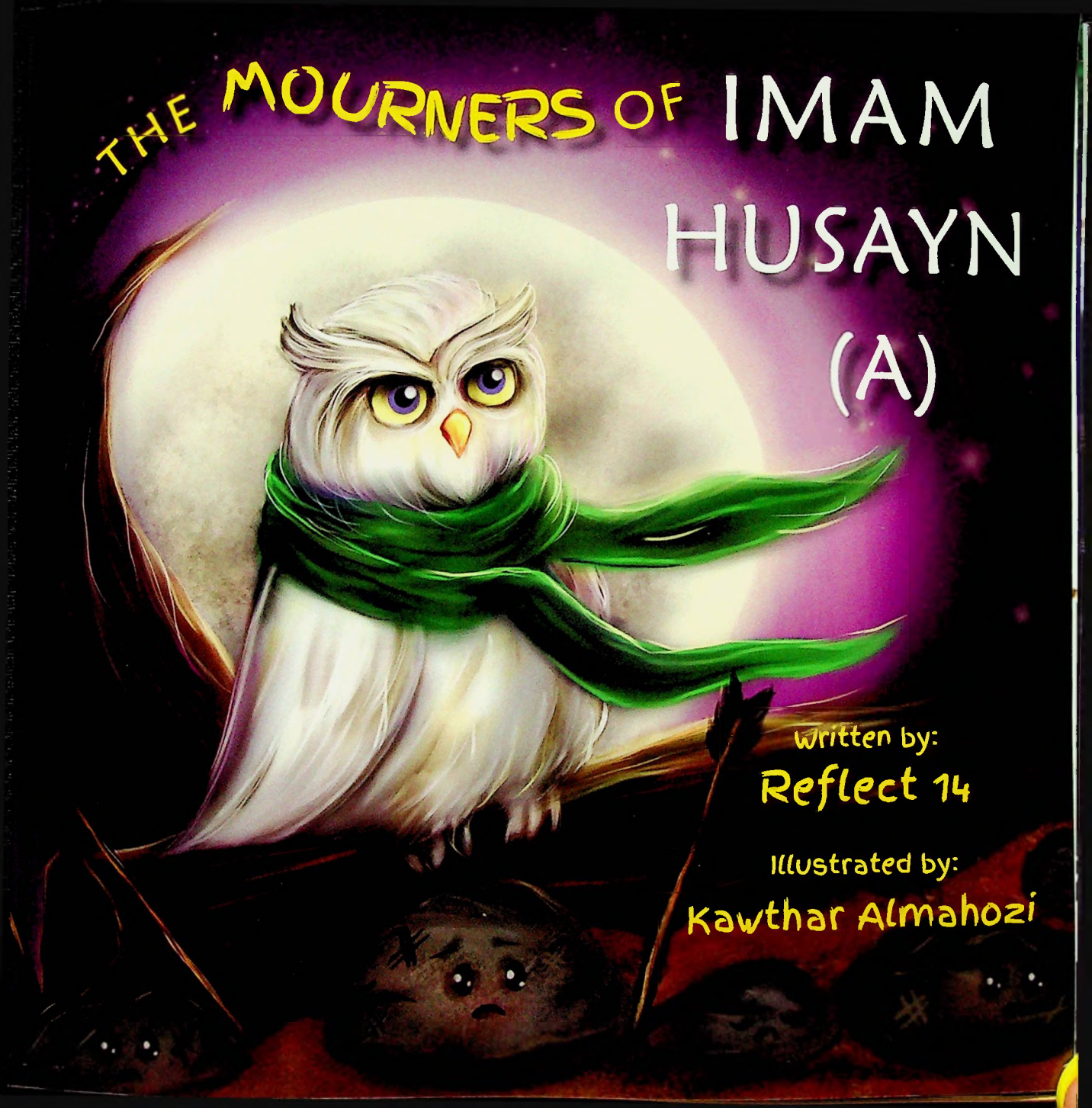
THE MOURNERS OF IMAM HUSAYN (A)

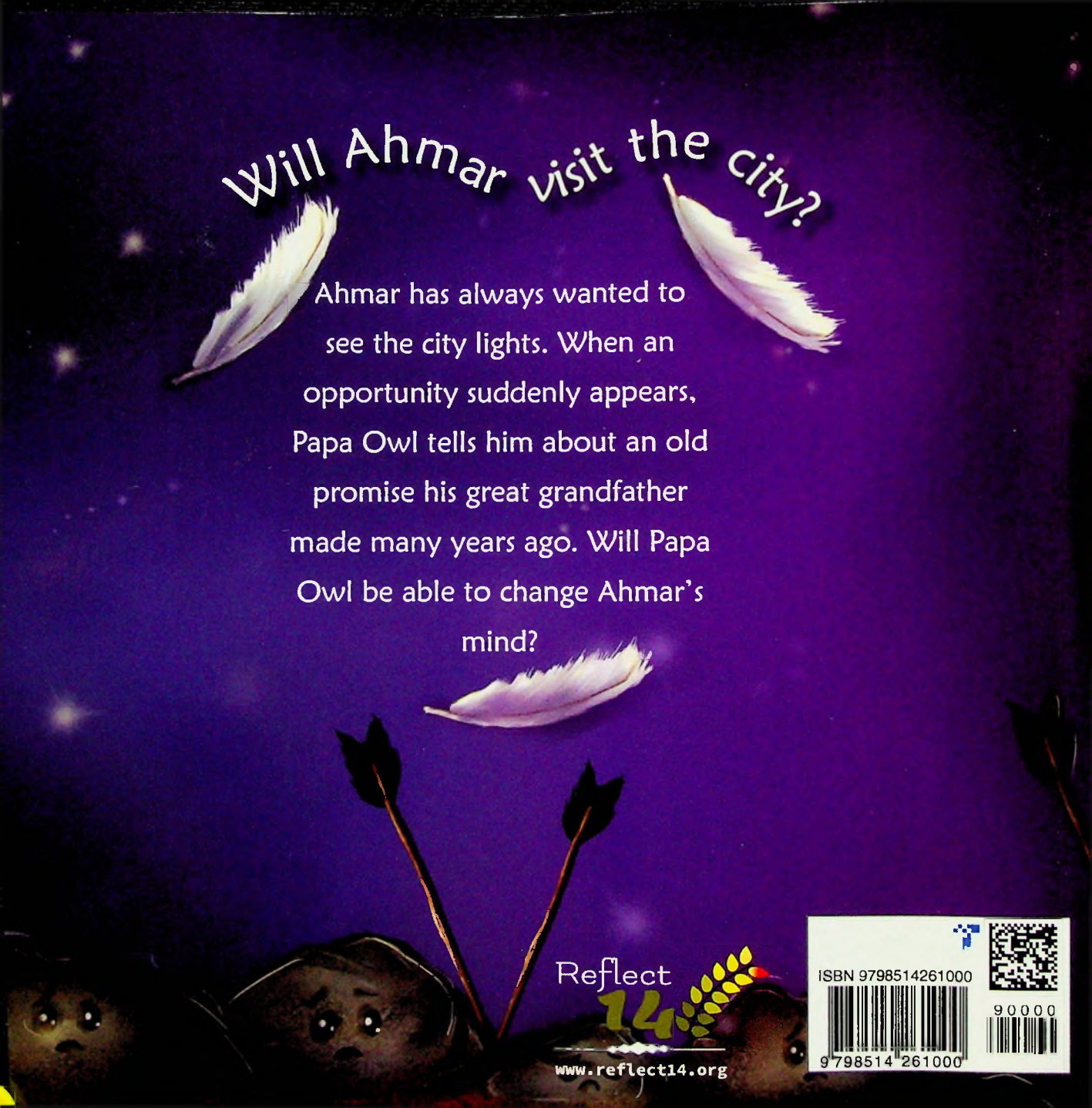


Written by:
Reflect 14

Illustrated by:
Kawthar Almahozi

Will Ahmar visit the city?

Ahmar has always wanted to see the city lights. When an opportunity suddenly appears, Papa Owl tells him about an old promise his great grandfather made many years ago. Will Papa Owl be able to change Ahmar's mind?



Reflect 14
www.reflect14.org
ISBN 9798514261000
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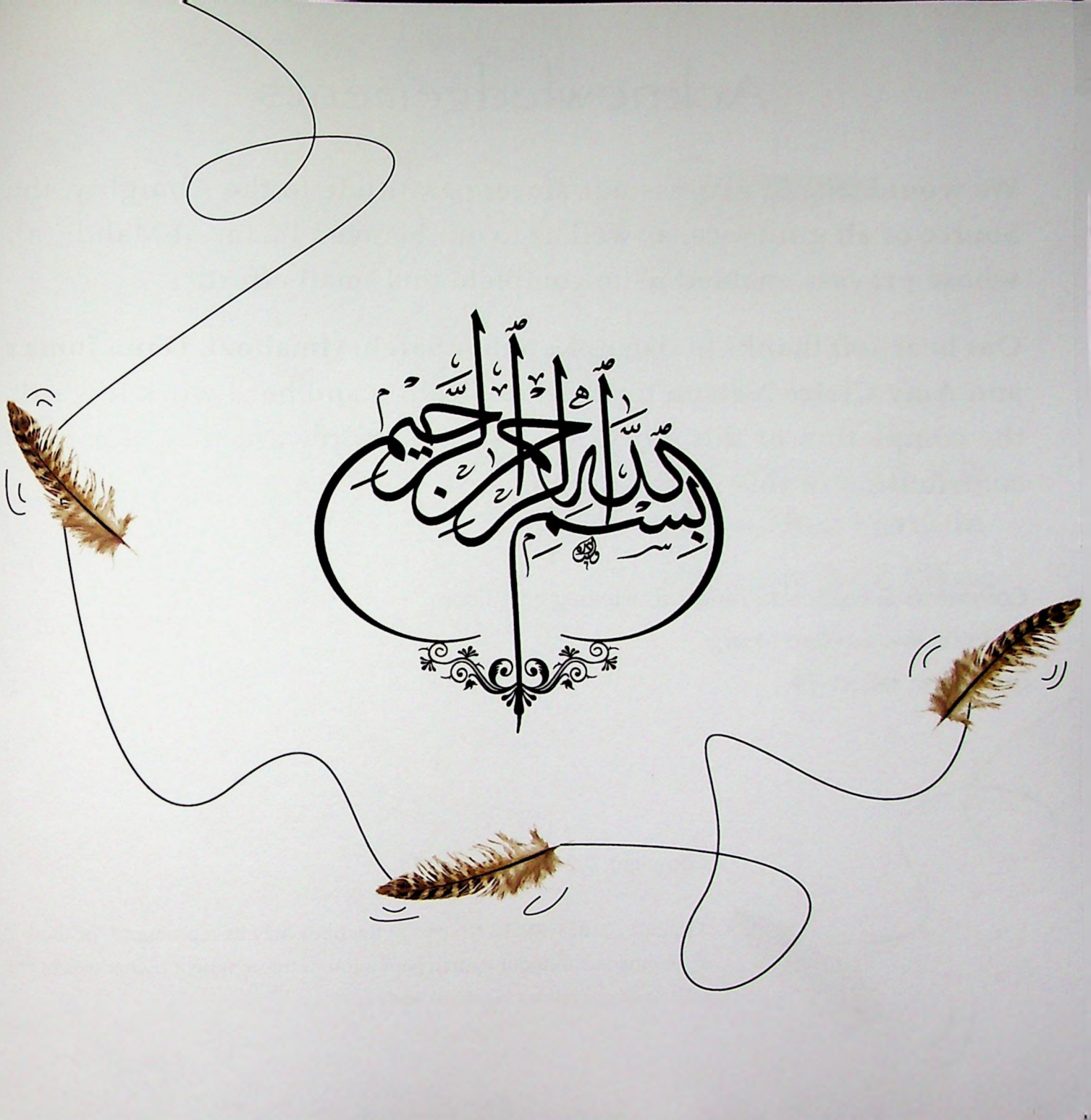
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Almighty, the Source of all guidance, as well as to our beloved Imam Al Mahdi (a), whose prayers enabled us to complete this small effort.

Our heartfelt thanks to sisters **Kawthar Saleh Almahozi**, **Dana Jomaa** and **Amy Claire Nelson** for their dedication and hard work towards the completion of this story. May Allah(swt) reward them for their contribution in this world and the next.

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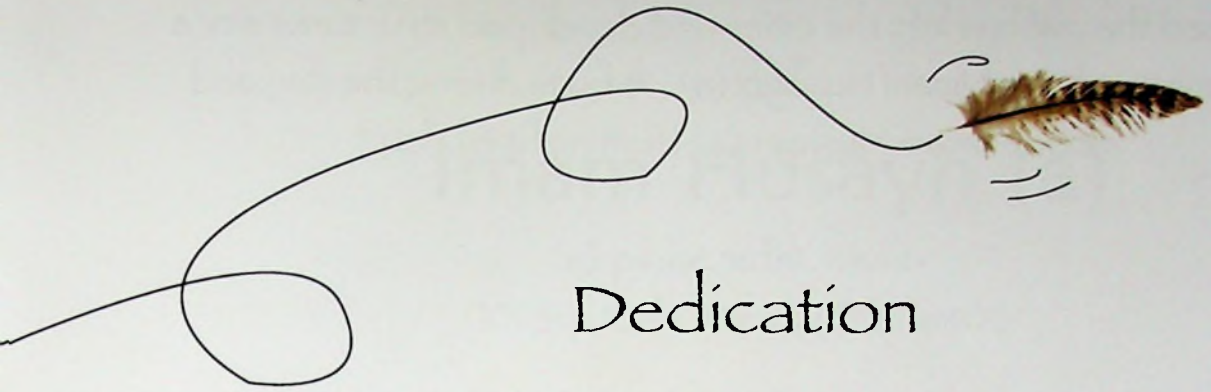


Dedication

To our beloved Imam Husayn (a) and his companions, who sacrificed their precious lives in the love of Allah (swt). In memory of their selfless actions, we will mourn them till our last days.

Note to Parents

"Indeed the owl has left the cities and developed structures since the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (a). It fasts during the day and mourns Imam Husayn (a) from night till day."

-Imam Jafar Sadiq (a)
(Kamil al-Ziyaraat, ch:31, pg 101)

The event of Ashura plays a significant role in pointing young minds towards the teachings of Ahlul Bayt (a). Based on the above hadith from Imam Jafar Sadiq (a), this story uses a unique set of characters to help explain the sacrifice of Imam Husayn (a) and his companions.

It can be difficult to discuss the concept of grief with younger children. But what if we were to introduce it as a power that can change a person's goals and outlook on life? In this way, when we mourn for Imam Husayn (a) and the tragedy of Karbala, we are readying ourselves for transformation. Each lesson is like a companion towards that end. With the aid of Allah (swt), a change may come about in the form of increased forgiveness or patience, obedience or valor—virtues that Allah wants us to cultivate within ourselves before we return to Him.

Please use the reflection prompts at the end to discuss the tragedy of Karbala with your children. We hope that, inshaAllah, this book will instill young hearts and minds with love for Imam Husayn (a).

The Mourners of Imam Husayn (a)

Written by: Reflect 14

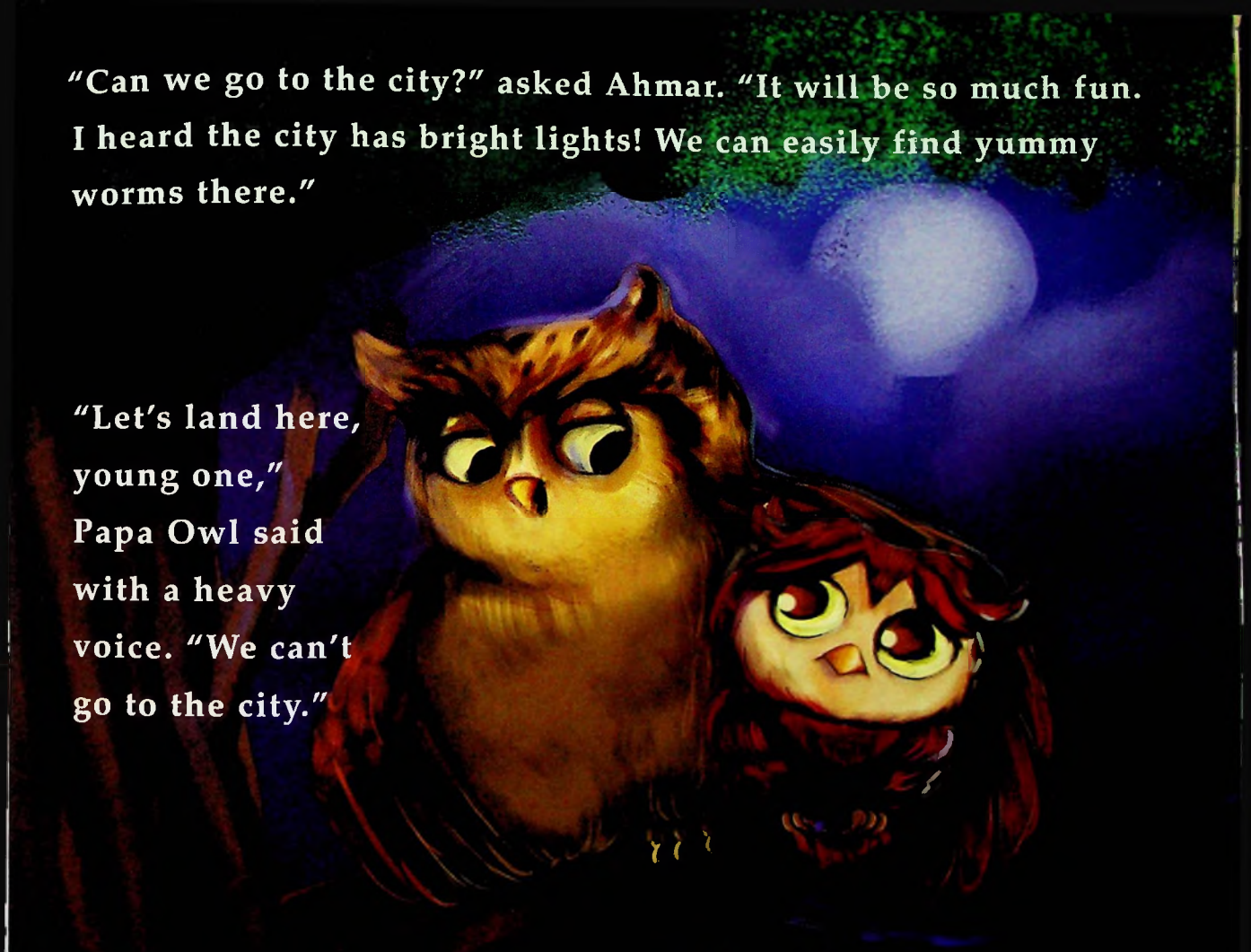
Illustrated by: Kawthar Almahozi

Ahmar and his father were flying in the forest in search of food. Many hours had passed and Ahmar was getting hangry.

"We have been flying for so long and still haven't found anything. It's too dark here, Papa," he complained.

"You have to be patient," said Papa Owl.

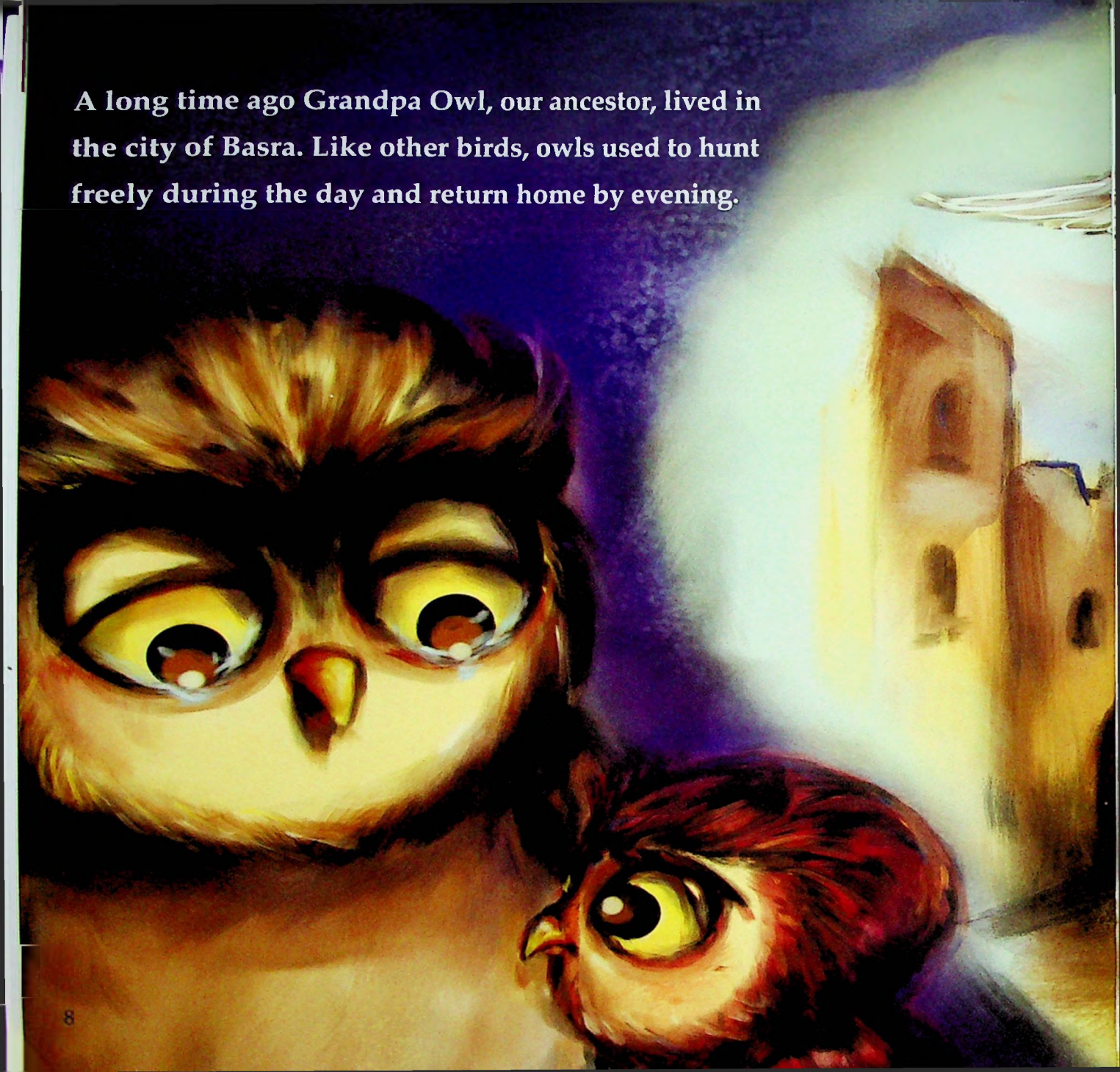
"Can we go to the city?" asked Ahmar. "It will be so much fun. I heard the city has bright lights! We can easily find yummy worms there."



"Let's land here, young one," Papa Owl said with a heavy voice. "We can't go to the city."

Papa's answer confused Ahmar. "Why not?" he asked.

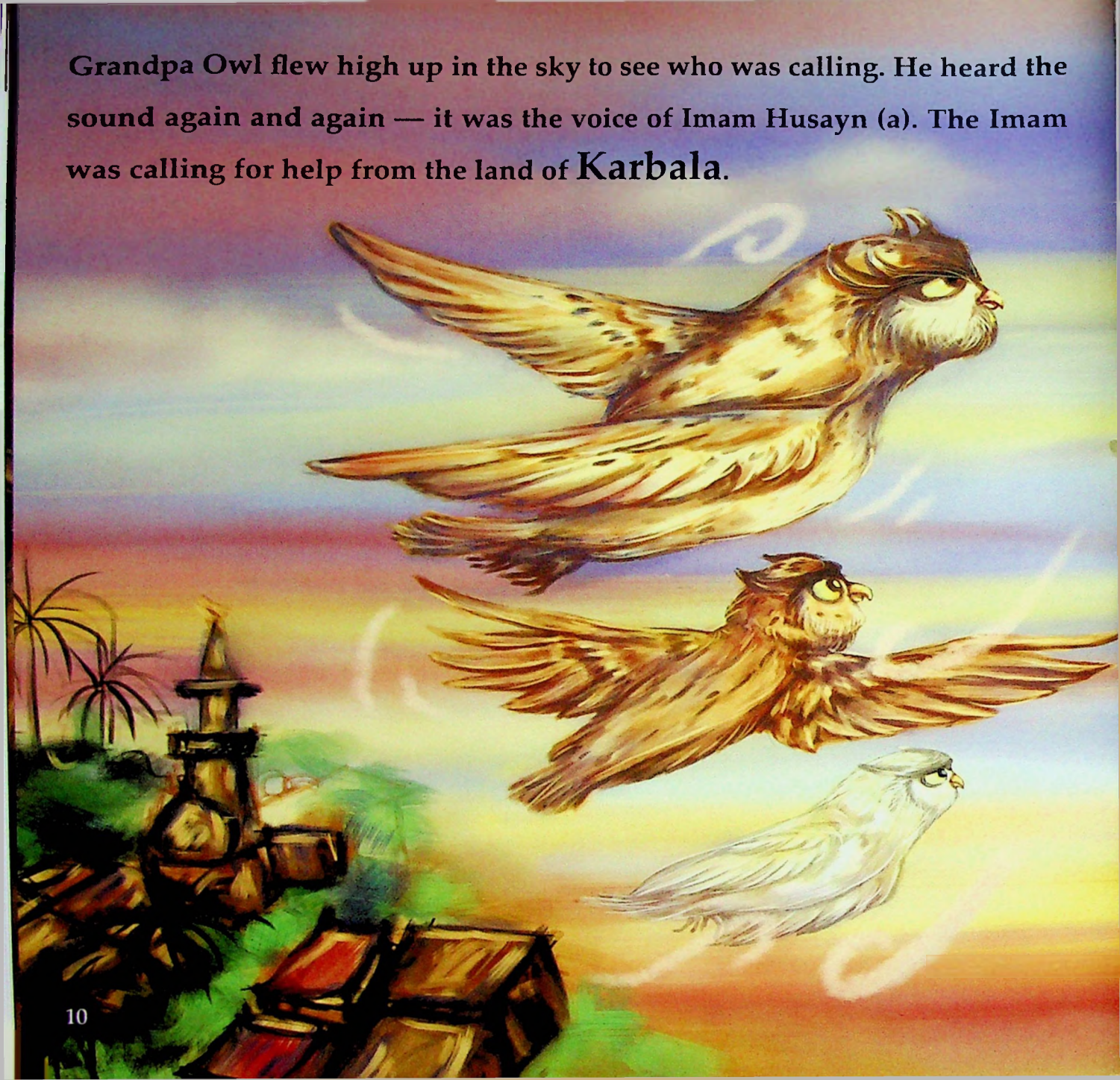
Papa Owl looked at his son with eyes deep like the ocean and said, "Let me tell you a story..."

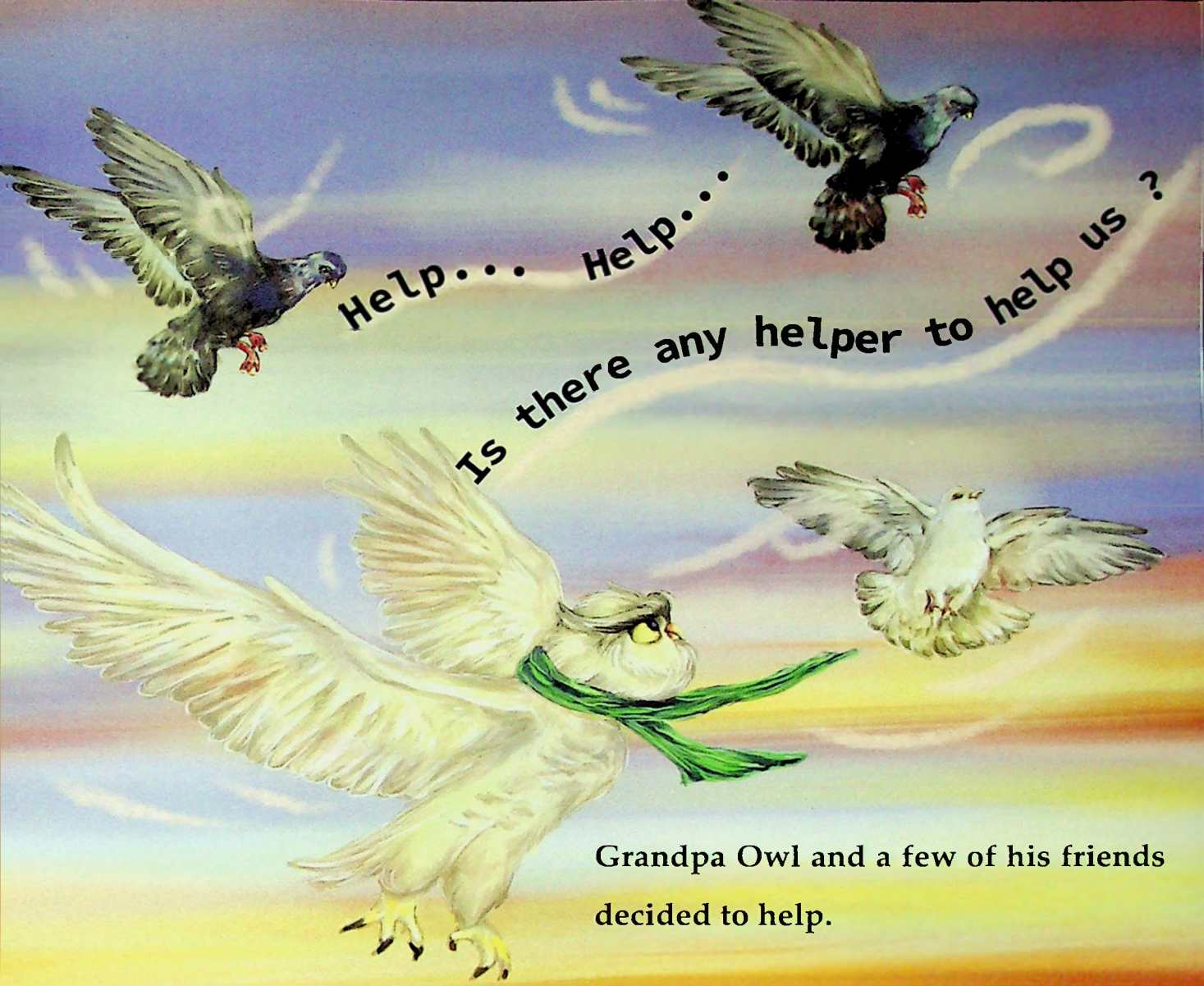


A long time ago Grandpa Owl, our ancestor, lived in the city of Basra. Like other birds, owls used to hunt freely during the day and return home by evening.

One day,
around Asr prayers,
a painful call came from
the skies:
"Is there any helper to help us?"

Grandpa Owl flew high up in the sky to see who was calling. He heard the sound again and again — it was the voice of Imam Husayn (a). The Imam was calling for help from the land of **Karbala**.





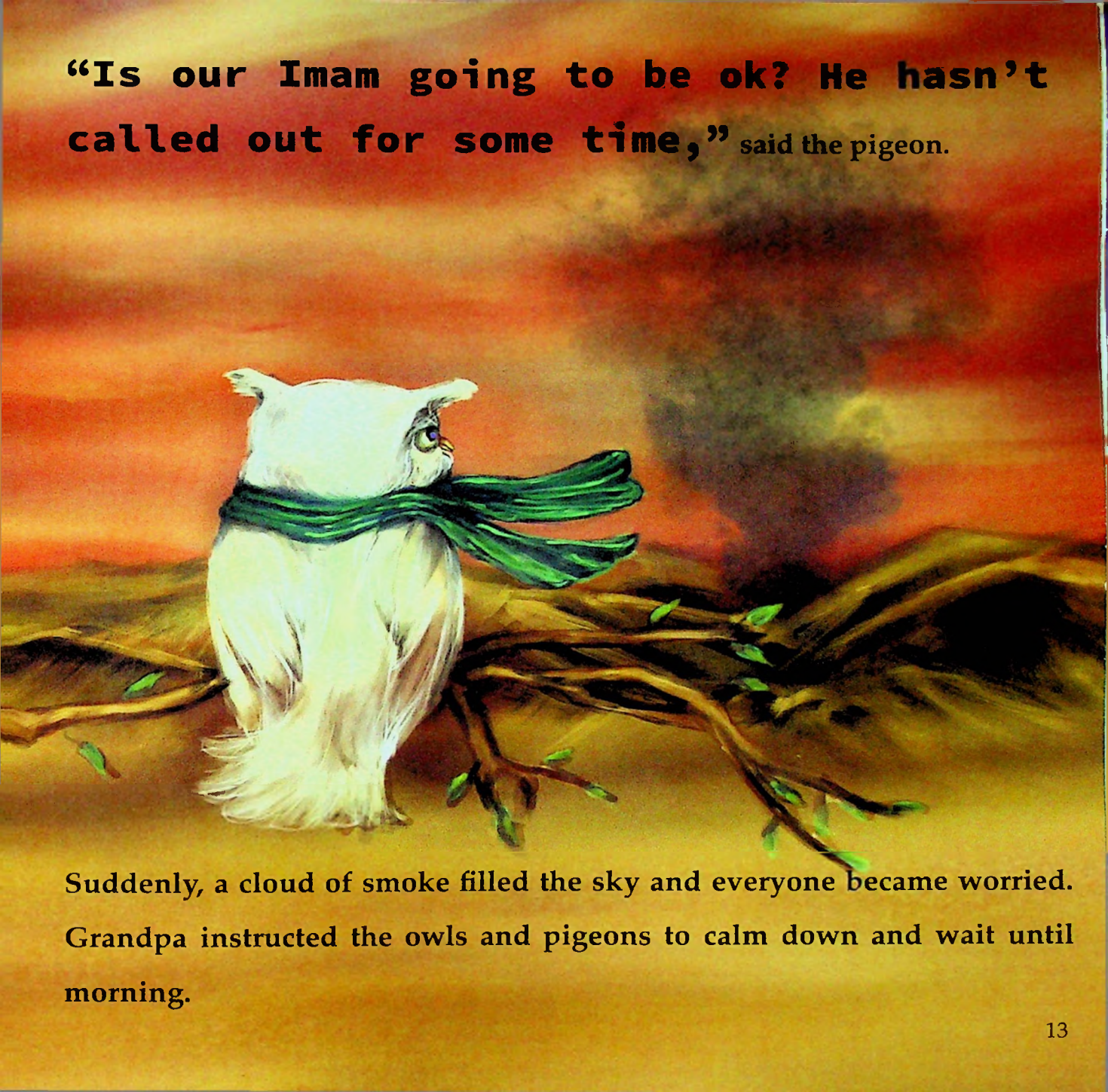
Grandpa Owl and a few of his friends decided to help.

Along the way, they met some pigeons who had also heard the painful call and wanted to respond to Imam Husayn (a).

They flew for many hours. As the sky grew darker, Grandpa Owl and his friends decided to take a rest and continue their journey in the daytime.

The birds were anxious to reach Imam Husayn (a) as the sky had become silent.

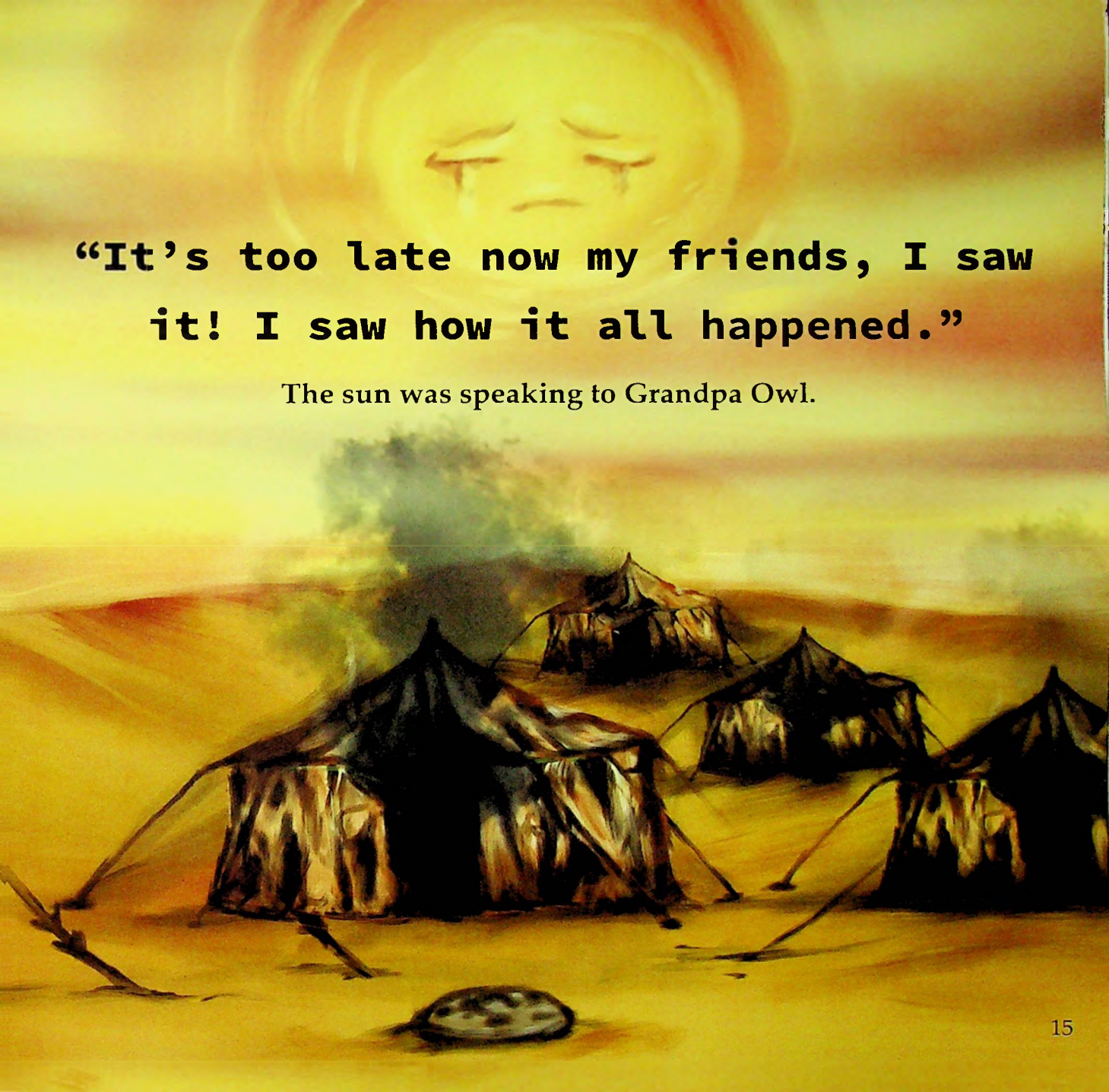
"Is our Imam going to be ok? He hasn't called out for some time," said the pigeon.



Suddenly, a cloud of smoke filled the sky and everyone became worried. Grandpa instructed the owls and pigeons to calm down and wait until morning.

The next day as the sun began to rise, everyone noticed that it had turned red. When Grandpa Owl and the pigeons reached Karbala, there was no sign of Imam Husayn (a). Instead, they saw what appeared to be a collection of tents, all burned to the ground.

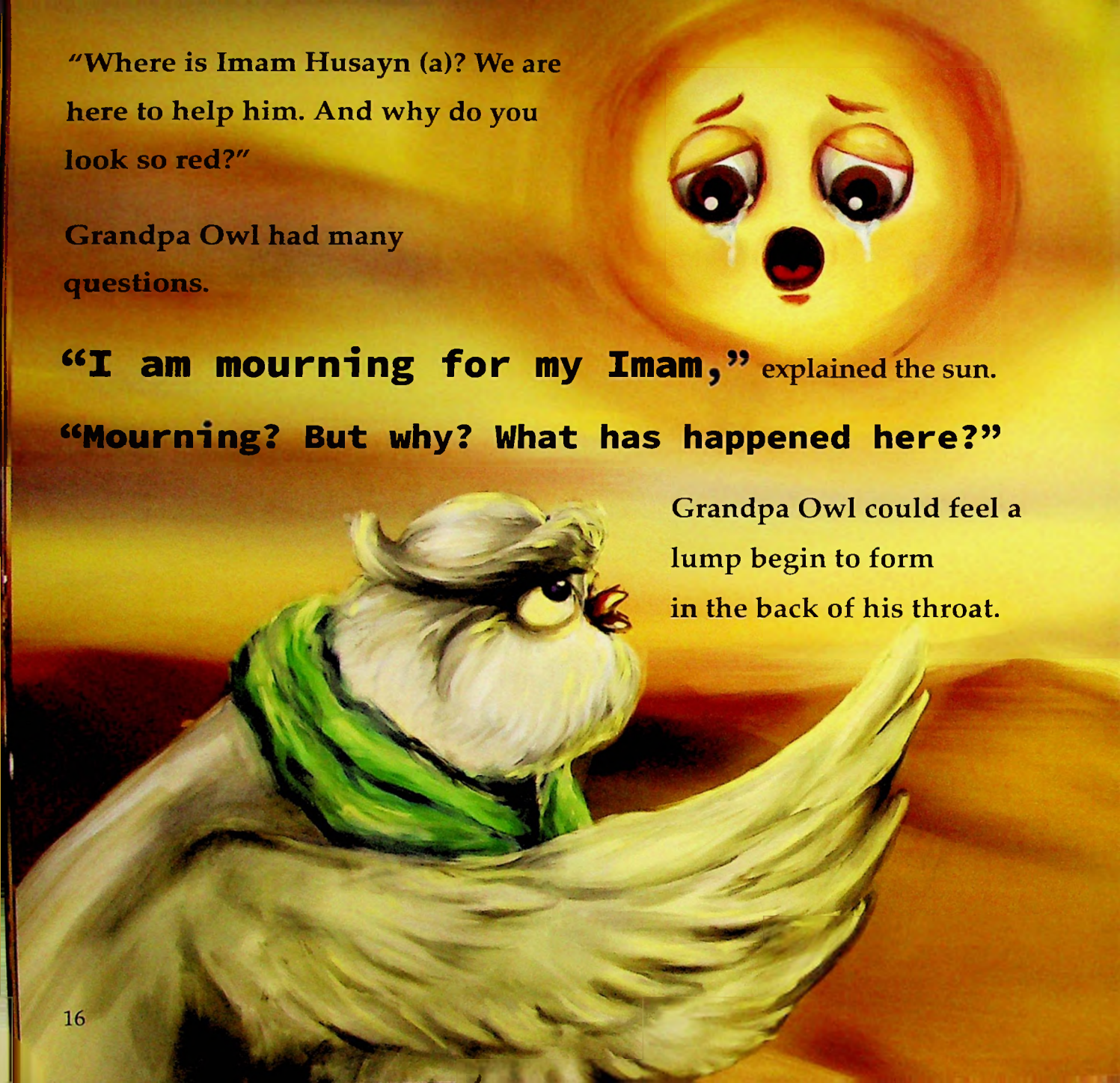
The owls and pigeons were **shocked** and **puzzled**. Moments later, an unexpected cry from above broke their silence.



The sun was speaking to Grandpa Owl.

"Where is Imam Husayn (a)? We are here to help him. And why do you look so red?"

Grandpa Owl had many questions.



"I am mourning for my Imam," explained the sun.

"Mourning? But why? What has happened here?"

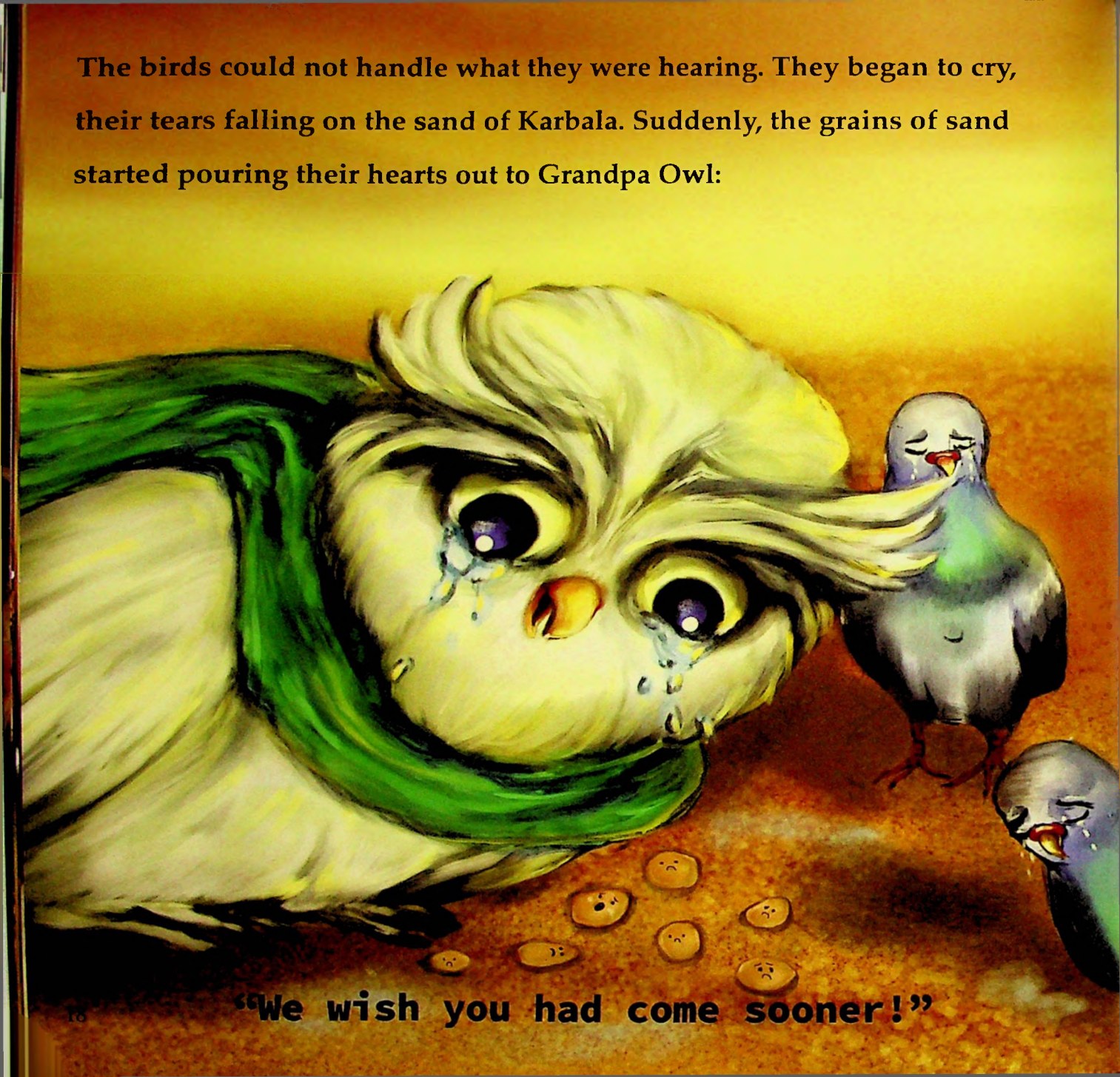
Grandpa Owl could feel a lump begin to form in the back of his throat.

"Yesterday was so hard for me, I witnessed everything clearly from up above." The sun paused briefly and continued: "I saw the fearless and brave companions who gave their lives one by one to protect Imam Husayn (a)."

"Alas! Alas, no one could save him."

The sun turned redder in pain as it recounted the story of what had happened on Ashura.

The birds could not handle what they were hearing. They began to cry, their tears falling on the sand of Karbala. Suddenly, the grains of sand started pouring their hearts out to Grandpa Owl:



"We were burning like fire yesterday. After that long and tiring battle, we tried our best to cool down so that their bodies wouldn't burn. Allah (swt) has raised our rank because we hold the Holy bodies of our Imam (a) and his companions."

The grains of sand, now full of grief, began to change color.

Grandpa Owl couldn't bear to hear about the fight and burst into tears. He was upset that he didn't arrive in time to help his Imam (a).

"I am very SORRY that I arrived so late."

Oh my dear Imam, please forgive me.

Grandpa wanted to be alone to gather his thoughts, so he flew towards a tree.

As he landed on one of the branches, his tears continued to flow. It wasn't long before he realized that the tree and the rocks beneath him were crying too.

"I couldn't do much," said the tree. "I wish I had all the power to stop Yazid's army. Some of them used my branches to make arrows to hit Imam Husayn (a).

Allah didn't create us for that purpose!"

Grandpa Owl could see the tears of the tree.

"Oh how we wish we were not here either," cried the rocks.

"Some of the soldiers from Yazid's army threw us at Imam Husayn (a)."

The tree and the rocks continued to express their grief and made a promise to each other. "Even though we couldn't help our Imam (a), we promise to mourn him forever."

Grandpa Owl was so distressed. He returned to his friends and informed them of everything.

The news that Imam Husayn (a) and his companions were martyred made everyone extremely upset. They headed towards the river Furaat to gather more details.

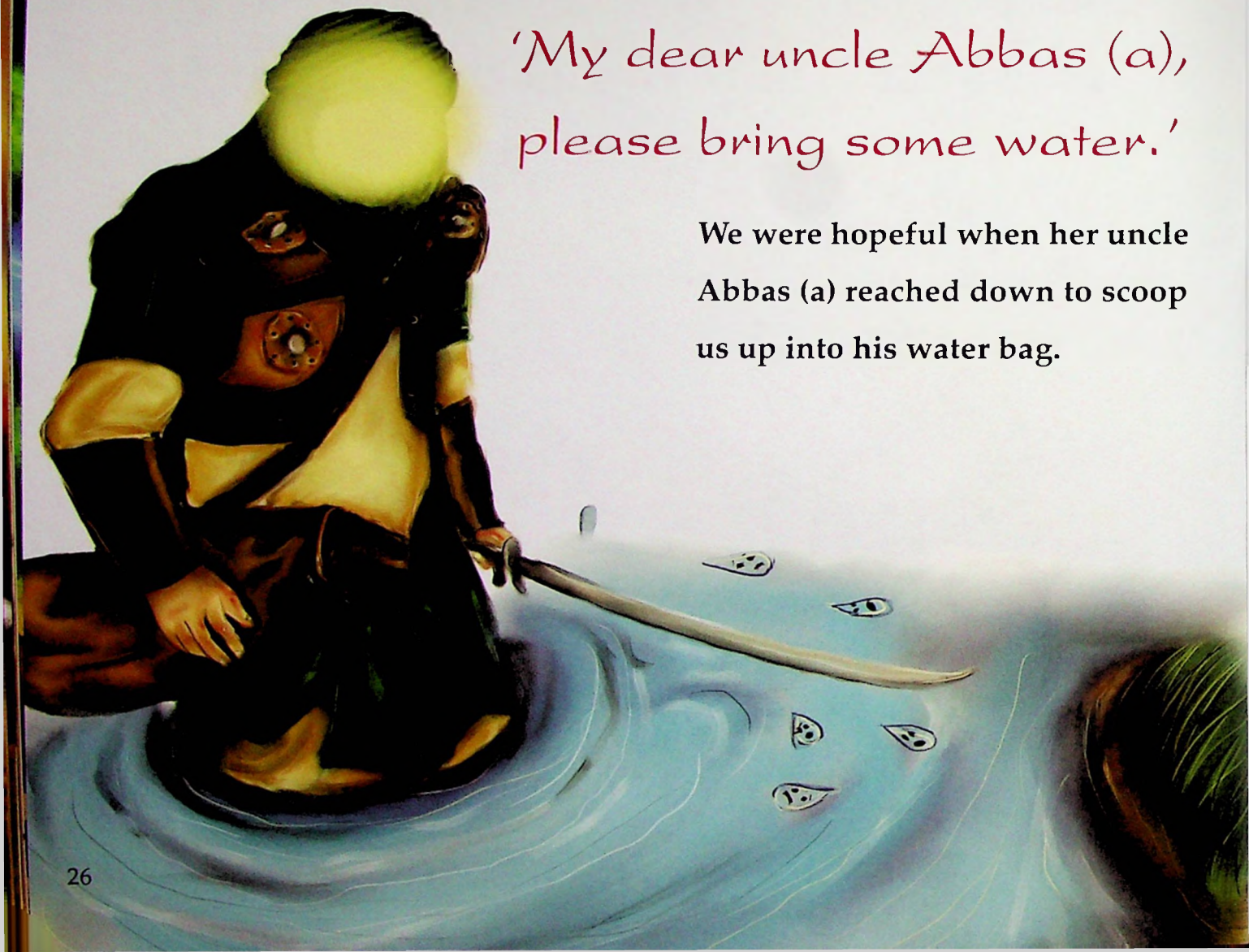
As Grandpa Owl came closer to the river, he could hear little cries bouncing off the surface of the water:

"She didn't get a single drop of water. Oh, the poor daughter of Husayn (a)."

Grandpa Owl was puzzled. "No water? Why not? How could anyone refuse to give water to a child?"

He had so many **questions.**

"Imam Husayn (a) and his family were thirsty for many days, yet all of them remained patient." The drops of water continued with their story. "Late in the afternoon on the day of Ashura we heard little Ruqayyah crying for us:



'My dear uncle Abbas (a), please bring some water.'

We were hopeful when her uncle Abbas (a) reached down to scoop us up into his water bag.

But as he was returning, Yazid's cruel soldiers started shooting arrows from all directions and punctured the water bag with many holes.

Sadly...

We couldn't reach the tents.

Oh dear Ruqayyah, we will always mourn for you! "

The river began to swell as all the drops cried out in unison for little Ruqayyah.

After hearing about the thirst of Imam Husayn's (a) children, the birds gathered together to mourn for his family. Grandpa was about to start the majlis when he saw another group of birds nearby.

He invited them to join the gathering. He could see that they too were in shock.

"It was horrible," said one of the birds. "We were flying back to our nest when we passed over the land of Karbala. There were bodies everywhere. We tried our best to cover them with sand." The little bird burst into tears as he remembered the scene. The pigeons and owls joined him in his pain.

"It is so heartbreaking to hear how harshly humans have treated our Imam (a)." Grandpa Owl's body shook with sadness. He took a deep breath and addressed the group:

"We will not return to the city anymore, it will be difficult for us to see humans again."

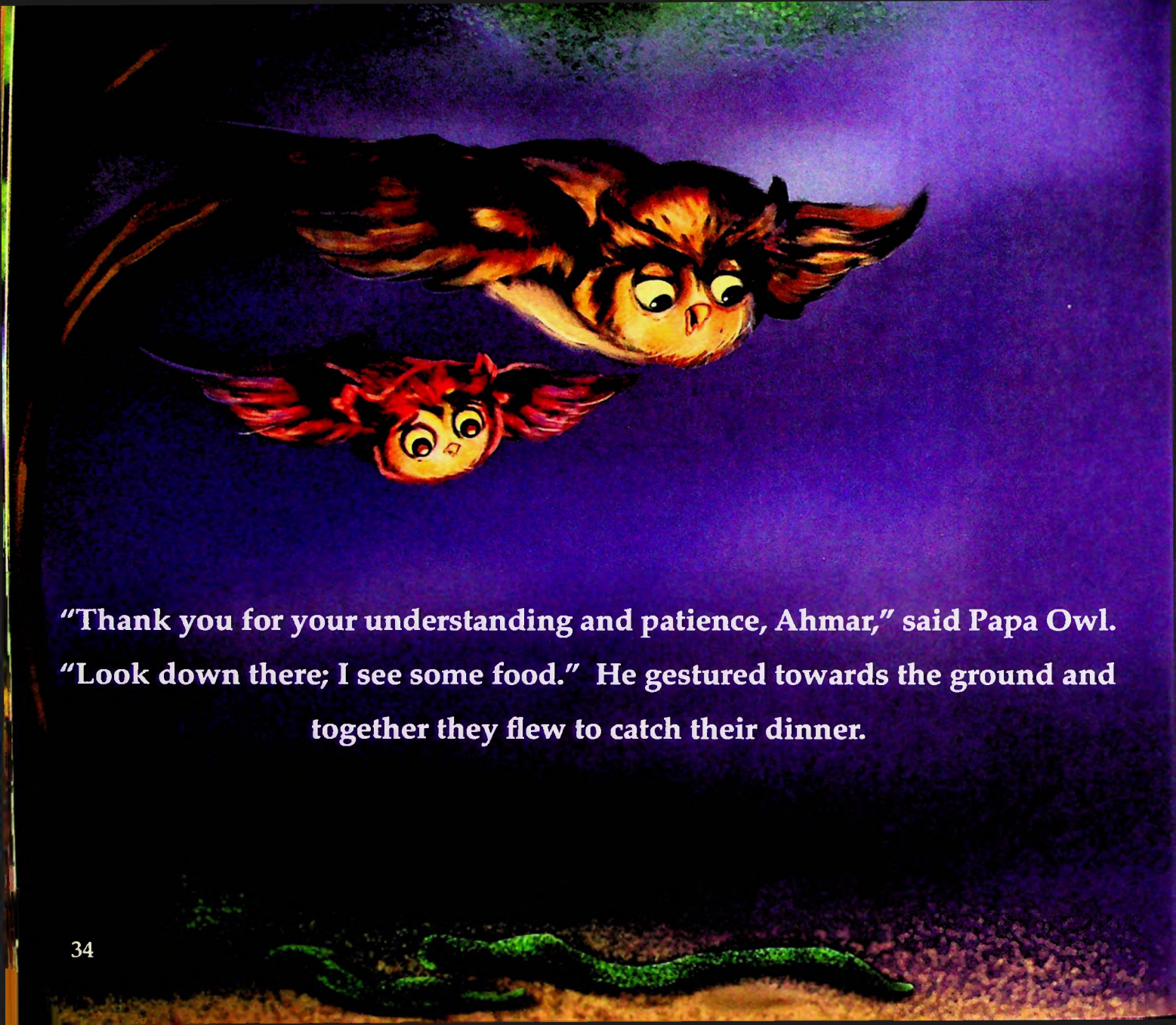
All the owls agreed with Grandpa and the pigeons vowed to mourn the Imam (a) day and night by cursing his killers.

Afterwards, the owls flew to deserted areas and the pigeons went towards cities to share the story of Imam Husayn (a).

Upon hearing the tragic story of Imam Husayn (a), Ahmar felt ashamed. "I understand everything now, Papa." His eyes began to well up with tears. "Someday can we go to Karbala together?" he asked.

"I'll take you, I promise." Papa Owl replied. "For now, let's send our salam to Imam Husayn (a), his family, and his companions." Papa Owl recited the ziyarat and Ahmar followed.

Peace be upon al-Husayn	اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَىٰ ٱلْحُسَيْن
and upon `Ali ibn al-Husayn,	وَعَلَىٰ عَلِيِّ بْنِ ٱلْحُسَيْن
and upon the sons of al-Husayn,	وَعَلَىٰ اَوْلاَدِ ٱلْحُسَيْن
and upon the companions of al-Husayn.	وَعَلَىٰ اَصْحَابِ ٱلْحُسَيْن



"Thank you for your understanding and patience, Ahmar," said Papa Owl. "Look down there; I see some food." He gestured towards the ground and together they flew to catch their dinner.

1. How did the characters in the book express their sadness for Imam Husayn (a)?
2. How do we mourn for Imam Husayn (a)?
3. Why do other creations of Allah (swt) mourn for Imam Husayn (a) and his companions?
4. What does the story tell you about owls?